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Chair's Corner



This fall has been quite the roller coaster ride of emotions!

Hurricane Harvey kicked us in a way that we responded with a determined resilience. You have all heard the

mantra that our community has used, that we've spoken to each other for strength and encouragement, "TEXAS STRONG"! It provided us the fortitude to continue and juggle the job with the mountain of personal things that had to be attended: moving, repairing, replacing, etc.

As we were beginning to weary, our Astros won the World Series!!! Just in time to provide the lift and spirit we needed as individuals and as a community!

We are taking the "TEXAS STRONG" into our FEB planning session this month. We will be identifying initiatives/events/efforts for our federal community for Fiscal Year 2018. If you have suggestions, ideas or input of any kind, please share with LeAnn Jenkins at LeAnn.Jenkins@gsa.gov so we can include in our planning.

We want to "lean forward" and push the boundaries of "creative and collaborative" for our FEB this year!

Watch this newsletter for upcoming events, awards, training opportunities, and FEB meetings. I want to provide more opportunities for our Federal Leaders to gather this year and get to know one another.

Our 2017 Leadership FEB class was interrupted by the Hurricane; however, they will begin meeting again and will be able to finish before the end of the calendar year. I appreciate those of you willing to host forums for this special group of leaders, providing them information on your agency, management challenges and tours. This inter-agency exposure adds to their leadership exposure and different ways of doing the same thing. We are all made better for it!

I look forward to seeing you at our events this next year!

Tim Jeffcoat, Chair

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9 WAYS TO FALL BACK TO SLEEP WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE NIGHT

In the U.S. 40% don't get enough sleep. Sleep-time has decreased over one hour per night since 1942 in the U.S.

Get enough sleep, if you're serious about bringing your best.

Think of sleep as a high-yield investment that enables high performance.

Need more sleep?

If you're sleepy during the day, you're not bringing your best to your team. Do you rely on coffee to keep you going? Maybe it's time to get more sleep.

4 Benefits of sleep:

1. Improved concentration and better recall.
2. Higher energy.
3. Emotional control.
4. Better health.

Danger:

Lack of sleep makes us ugly and stupid.

There's some truth to needing your beauty rest. You aren't as handsome when you're tired. Additionally, the chances of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke increase.

Get enough sleep if you're trying to lose weight.

When you wake up and can't get back to sleep:

1. Reflect on kind people from your past who have helped you.

2. Count backwards from 100.
3. Get up and do something relaxing. After 20 minutes, go to another room and read, for example.
4. Pray.
5. Remember obstacles you have overcome in the past.
6. Concentrate on your breathing.
7. Stretch and relax part of your body. Begin with your toes.

8. Turn on white noise.
9. Record what's on your mind. Keep a writing pad on the night stand.

Sleep tips:

1. Schedule sleep time.
2. Avoid computer screens unless they are tinted for night use.
3. Wear yellow tinted glasses that block blue light.
4. Relax 30 minutes before bedtime. Turn off the TV. Stop surfing the Internet. Read. Turn down the lights.

Added tool:

Try the National Sleep Foundation Sleep Diary to track your sleep habits over a one- or two-week period and bring the results to your physician.

Make sleep a priority, if you expect to bring your best to your team.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/10/08/9-ways-to-fall-back-to-sleep-when-you-wake-up-in-the-night/>



Fitting the Pieces Together

Exploring the linkage between job fit, discretionary effort, and performance

In its 2015 white paper *Engaging the Federal Workforce: How to Do It & Prove It*, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) advanced job fit as an important component of engagement since it reflects the degree to which employees feel their personality and values align with their current job. While good job fit seems reasonable and desirable, OPM does not explore how job fit drives engagement and ultimately job performance. It is that employees who are a better fit enjoy their work more and hence perform better? Or perhaps better-fit employees are easier to manage, leading to higher appraisal ratings. Identifying *how* good job fit leads to engagement and job performance may inform performance improvement efforts.

One clue comes from the private sector through the Corporate Leadership Council's (CLC) research. CLC's report *Building the High-Performance Workforce: A Quantitative Analysis of the Effectiveness of Performance Management Strategies* reported results from its 2002 Performance Management Survey, showing that matching employees with jobs they do best and creating opportunities for employees to capitalize on their strengths increased employees' discretionary effort by 29% and individual job performance by 25%. In other words, discretionary effort is a mechanism through which job fit improved job performance. Specifically, the better the match between an employee's interest/skills and the job, the more they are willing to "go the extra mile" and perform above and beyond requirements.

MSPB's analysis of the 2016 Merit Principles Survey explored whether CLC's findings carried over to the Federal sector. Analyzing data from over 14,000 Federal employees, MSPB combined responses to survey items such as "I look for ways to better apply my

abilities" and "I take the initiative to collaborate with others" to form a single, multi-item measure of discretionary effort. We did the same using responses to items such as "My work is a good fit for who I am" and "My work is the kind of work that I want to do" to measure the degree of job fit for each respondent. Finally, we asked respondents to reveal the performance rating they had received and the rating they think they deserved, providing an estimate of individual job performance.

Consistent with CLC's research, we found that job fit is a key driver of discretionary effort, which in turn is a key driver of employees' performance ratings.

Importantly, statistical analyses show that discretionary effort appears to be a causal mechanism that connects job fit to performance

rating. This means that the better the fit between employees and the work they do, the more discretionary effort they will put forth which will in turn increase individual performance.

MSPB first identified the relationship between job fit, discretionary effort/employee engagement, and organizational performance in our 2008 report *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*. Now we can demonstrate a statistical relationship between job fit, discretionary effort, and individual performance. What can organizations do to ensure that employees feel well-fit to their jobs? As we said in 2008, it all starts with good recruitment and assessment practices.

Realistic job previews (RJPs), as described in our September 2008 newsletter, are valuable tools in helping potential candidates decide if the job is a good fit for them before applying.

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7 PROFOUND BENEFITS OF NAVIGATING STORMS

There will come a time when things get worse, even when you try to make them better.

Optimism is an attitude toward storms, not exemption from them. Don't be startled when skies grow dark and waves get high.

Any form of optimism that blinds leaders to dark skies and stormy seas is perilous.

Get real:

Imperfect leaders screw up. Don't be surprised when you:

1. Communicate ineffectively.
2. Misjudge situations.
3. Unintentionally offend.
4. Listen poorly.
5. Hire the wrong people.
6. Create discord.
7. Discourage, rather than energize.

Leaders who never screw up aren't worth following.

Optimism in the dark: Optimism is confidence, not exemption.

Optimism believes storms yield benefits.

7 profound benefits of navigating storms:

#1. Empathy. Everyone who owns their failures learns empathy for others. Blaming blocks growth.

Empathy enables connection, boldness, and getting up after falling short.

#2. Courage. Sailing through one storm builds courage for the next. Quitting in the storm short-circuits your opportunity to embrace your best self.



#3. Openness.

Isolation is dangerous when skies are dark and seas are high. Temptations to close your door are triggers to open it. Unplug your ears and open your heart in the dark.

Optimistic leaders maintain an outward mindset while navigating storms.

#4. Ownership. Own the consequences of your failures, but don't circle the drain. Remorse for causing harm is healthy, but bags of guilt crush the spirit.

"Woe is me," might seem noble, but it's self-centered.

#5. Timeliness. Address issues quickly. Lean into the wind before it becomes a hurricane.

Avoiding turbulence only delays the storm.

#6. Steadiness. You're less likely to panic after you've navigated a few calamities.

#7. Authenticity. Storms reveal who you are.

Raise your hand when you fail. "Yes, I screwed up." The way you deal with failure exposes what you believe about yourself and others.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/09/18/7-profound-benefits-of-navigating-storms/>

10 Ways to Overcome a Bad Day at Work

Everyone has "one of those days" occasionally. Since this is a normal, acceptable part of work, it's important to strategize how you manage after a challenging day at work because it can have impact on a multitude of levels both at work and at home.

Here are 10 ways you can stay resilient, positive, and productive after a bad day at work:

1. Something good happened. Too often when something negative happens at work—didn't get the contract, customer is upset, or some other bad news—we let this event contaminate the entire day, but in reality, there are good things that happened too. *Was it a bad day? Or was it a bad 5 minutes that you milked all day?*

2. Limit your complaining time. Acknowledge the challenging situation, but limit your complaining. I give myself 45 seconds a day to complain – the way I figure it is since complaining does not lead to anything productive and is a time and energy waster, why do it at all? However, it seems we all "need" to let off a little steam from time to time. It has taken me years to get down to only 45 seconds a day of complaining and there are days that I exceed 45 seconds. Perhaps you could start with a 10 minutes per day limit. No one wants to be known as that person whose best quality is their ability to complain. *Complaining is a zero-return investment.*

3. Keep track of things that go well at work. Keep a collection of all the positives things that happen at work like thank you notes, testimonials, and stories about customers or coworkers showing you appreciation. Keep notes in an easily accessible folder or journal so you can pull them out and read them when you're having "one of those days". This will remind you

that not all days are bad and good things happen too.

Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory. —Dr. Seuss

4. Let some steam off. You're not expected to internalize every negative thing that happens—even when it's in the middle of the work day. So instead of complaining or letting your feelings bottle up, give yourself permission to let off some steam. Take a break, go for a walk, do some deep breathing, or do something else that allows you to feel more relaxed. When you get into the habit of doing this, you'll respond to negative situations more positively and you'll be less likely to get thrown off by setbacks. *It is not the load that breaks you down it's the way you carry it. —Lou Holtz*

5. Seek out a different perspective. Sometimes we get caught up in our own world. This can make it difficult to gain a proper perspective. A great way to shift your perspective is to call a friend who can help you think about the situation more positively. *Question: Why does the baby like to be picked up? Answer: Same reason you like to be picked up – a change in perspective.*

6. Take the long view. Do your best to take the long-term view with the understanding that tomorrow is a new day and nothing stays the same for too long. *It might be stormy right now but it can't rain forever.*

7. Do something uplifting. Do something you know will uplift your spirits automatically. What are your go-to mood boosters; is it an uplifting song, inspiring talk, movie or video? *Don't be discouraged. It's often the last key in the bunch that opens the lock. —Unknown*

8. Do your best not to bring it home – create boundaries. Since most people find the line between work and home blurred, it is much easier to say, "leave your problems

at work" than it is to do it. However, strive to have the mindset that work challenges have no place at home and vice versa. After a bad day at work do your best to consume yourself with your family or a hobby so you can give the bad day a rest and you don't contaminate your family unnecessarily with rehashing it. When I let work leak into my home life too much it creates problems at home and when I let home leak into work it creates problems at work.

Don't allow problems that began in the kitchen follow you to the dining room.

9. Exercise. It could be as simple as getting out of your office and going for a brisk walk. A good sweat at the gym whether that is playing a sport like tennis, basketball or going for a run, or any kind of movement can be stress reducing and take your mind off your challenge.

Bad days make for great workouts.

10. Journal and take time to reflect.

Writing out frustrations and trials can also be therapeutic. When I think on paper it helps me get out of my head and I am able to come up with solutions that are helpful. Research is showing that not only does regular journaling improve your emotional well-being, but writing out your feelings can benefit your physical health as well.

Journaling is like whispering to one's self and listening at the same time. —Mina Murray

Bonus: Tackle manageable doable tasks.

Don't let the setback ruin all of your productivity. Perhaps you can't take on a big heady project, but maybe you can get through some paperwork or organizing that will be helpful.

<https://www.gregbellspeaks.com/blog/10-ways-to-overcome-a-bad-day-at-work>

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RJPs can be as simple as including "This Job Is for You if..." statements in job opportunity announcements. Such statements ask the applicant to consider less measurable competencies (e.g., customer service orientation emotional intelligence, decisiveness, flexibility, teamwork and creative thinking) required by the job and offer the opportunity to self-evaluate whether the job is a good fit. For example, a customer service representative position announcement may say: This job is for you if you like (1) listening to customers' needs and concerns and (2) calming people down when they are frustrated.

At the assessment stage, organizations may use job simulations to improve fit. In our 2009 report Job Simulations: Trying Out for a Federal Job, we define job simulation as an assessment that presents applicants with realistic, job-related situations and documents their behaviors or responses to help determine their qualifications for the job. These simulations can also help applicants determine if the job is a good fit to their interests and abilities.

Beyond good recruitment and assessment, jobs can often be made to better fit employees by using job redesign, enlargement, and enrichment. In our 2012 report Federal Employee Engagement: The Motivating Potential of Job Characteristics and Rewards, we show how (1) jobs can be expanded or enriched to include duties that better match the employee's competencies and interests and (2) employees can be rotated among jobs where competencies and interests are better matched.

Considering the research finding that well-fit employees are more likely to "go the extra mile" and perform better, there is much that organizations can do to more closely align people to work and work to people.

Taken from the Issues of Merit Fall 2017 edition, published by the US Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation.

The Amazing Power of Being Valued by Others and the Path to Get There

Don't scoff when people talk about feelings. Respect – being valued by others – is a feeling.

Feelings of respect bring respectful behaviors to life.

People don't respect leaders simply because there's a title on the door. Titles are a beginning, but respect is earned.

Observations:

Disrespect contaminates environments and pollutes relationships.

The opposite of respect is dysfunctional teams, weak relationships, and poor performance.

Respect makes difficult work easier, turbulence less disruptive, and achievements more rewarding.

Respect is earned slowly and lost easily.

Show it:

Show respect if you hope to earn respect.

Move first. Be first to show respect, not to demand it.

Leaders that demand respect have already lost it.

12 ways to earn respect:

1. Hold yourself accountable. The more authority you have, the less likely people will hold you accountable – to your face.
2. Course-correct publicly when you screw up in front of others.
3. Explore the impact of your presence on others. Pay attention to how you

show up. Learn to adapt without losing yourself.

4. Explore constructive dissent. Don't take it personally. Honor those who work to make things better, even if they disagree with you.

5. Listen closely.

6. Identify with another's distress. Don't simply say, "It's going to be OK." Acknowledge that the issue is important. People feel disrespected when you belittle their concerns or distress.

7. Don't quickly tell people how to solve their problems. Be concerned and available, but don't belittle their struggle by offering off-handed solutions.
8. Honor strengths and successes. Don't ignore the bad, just notice the good more frequently. Respect is earned when you honor another's strengths, rather than flaunting your own.
9. Honor the work of others, even if results disappoint.
10. Practice social courtesies. Ask how people are doing.
11. Focus on issues, not personalities, when tensions rise.
12. Grab an oar. Sweat a little. Avoid making exemptions for yourself.



<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/09/23/the-amazing-power-of-being-valued-by-others-and-the-path-to-get-there/>

Don't Wait to Be Asked: Lead

Ask people what they would change about their organizations, and you are likely to get an earful. The company website is clunky; it's past time to rethink that tired growth strategy; and why oh why does the sales team continue to neglect potential customers in South America?

Someone should really do something. But who?

"There's some magical group of people called 'those guys,' who are men and women we have to wait for," says [Harry Kraemer](#), a clinical professor of strategy at the Kellogg School. But the better path, he says, is to lose the shroud of magic around this group and simply become part of it. "The people who are really the leaders—the real, true leaders—are the people who literally say, 'Well wait a minute. I am one of 'those guys.'"

He offers the following roadmap to future leaders looking to change their organizations right now.

1. Lead from where you are. If you work for an organization, no matter your role, you already have all the clout you need to begin leading, Kraemer says.

"When I bring up this topic, very often younger people will say, 'I really want to be a leader, but I've got this one slight problem: I don't have anybody reporting to me. When I get the phone call that I've now got a couple of people reporting to me, I'm going to shove this thing into fifth gear and start leading.'"

But leadership doesn't require direct reports, or a long tenure at an organization, says Kraemer. You are equally capable of leading "whether you've got 50,000 people reporting to you or nobody."

2. Start offering solutions. See some problems? Go ahead! Take them to your boss. But make it a point to offer one or two solutions as well.

In fact, early in his career, Kraemer had a boss who rewarded his direct reports through a point system: one point for mentioning a problem, one thousand points for bringing a solution.

"If I come to my boss and say, 'here's an issue or an opportunity' without coming up with at least one solution, there is not much reward. But if I bring at least one or two potential solutions, I am leading. I may be well aware of the fact that my boss has fifteen years of experience, where I may only have fifteen weeks.

The company may decide to do something very different in the end, but I'm not watching the movie. I'm in the movie."

In other words, your solutions may be terrible. They may be impractical and unwieldy. But the very act of generating solutions announces to yourself and others that you are a person who wants to get things done.

Just be aware that acting on problems, rather than simply finding them, requires a strong backbone. "It's much, much easier to sit in the stands and talk about all of the issues," says Kraemer. Being a leader, he says, requires adopting the mindset of, "I've really got to get off my duff here and be held accountable, take responsibility, and deal with the consequences."

3. Do your research. Learn everything you can about your organization, even if—especially if—it appears to have little or nothing to do with your own position.



Don't Wait to Be Asked: Lead (cont'd)

Stay attuned to information you may not ordinarily be privy to. What programs, divisions, or special task forces might be operating that you don't even know about? When Kraemer was a financial analyst at Baxter International, where he would eventually serve as chairman and CEO, he was standing in the checkout line at a grocery store when an acquaintance asked him a question: What did he think of the recent acquisition made by Division A?

"I didn't know that we had made an acquisition," Kraemer confesses. "And my real frustration or embarrassment was I didn't even realize that Division A was part of Baxter! I said, 'Wait a minute. That's the last day that's ever going to happen.'"

For his part, Kraemer used to listen to a recording of the quarterly conference call where Baxter's CEO and CFO took questions from shareholders and analysts. "I would play the question, I would stop the tape, and I would say, 'If I was the CFO or CEO, how would I answer the question?'"

4. Build your network. As part of your research, make a point to get to know two or three people in every function, division, and business unit of your organization. What are your colleagues in IT up to? What about your colleagues in Japan? The idea, says Kraemer, is to create a "tremendous network across all areas of the organization."

This takes time, especially when you are also conducting your daily business. Volunteering for special projects is often a good starting point. Even something as informal as offering assistance to a team member in another department can be a window into complex processes and problems facing other arms of the organization.

Don't worry about whom you are helping or how high up they are in the organizational hierarchy, says Kraemer. "Don't think, 'What do I get out of it?'" Instead, simply reach out

to whomever you think you can help and learn what you can about the organization in the process.

5. Encourage future leaders. As you practice active leadership, do your best to inspire others to do the same. Wherever you sit, encourage those around you to speak up, offer solutions, and take on special projects that will expand their own networks and understanding. Of course, empowering your colleagues to lead is an act of leadership in its own right. But it also works to cement your position as an integral hub in your organization. If each of your connections is encouraged to have three or four connections of her own, fairly soon you will have access to a highly robust network.

This level of connectivity and awareness will make you better in your current role. "Yes, you're good at your area or your function, but you also understand extremely well how your area fits into the total organization," says Kraemer.

Ultimately the breadth of your connections—and your willingness to use them to get things done—may finally give you enough influence to match your ambitions. "Do you want to be a phenomenal human resource professional who works for your organization," asks Kraemer, "or do you want to be one of the people running your organization who still, among other things, knows a lot about human resources?"

<http://www.govexec.com/excellence/promising-practices/2017/10/dont-wait-be-asked-lead/141753/?oref=voices-module>